United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali tells news conference in Geneva today that he would travel to Sarajevo tomorrow; also announces establishment of three-man tribunal on war crimes in former Yugoslavia; to meet shortly with Under-Secretary-General James Jonah, Special Envoy in Middle East, who is currently in the area.

+ Somalia's Permanent Representative to United Nations urges that no new decisions be taken on Somalia until all local factions are consulted.

+ Helicopter belonging to United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia fired upon yesterday; no casualties reported.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told a news conference in Geneva today that he would be going to Sarajevo tomorrow, following the first round of talks he held over the weekend with the two Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia - Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance, as well as with the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) Dobrica Cosic, the President of Croatia, Franjo Tudjman, and President Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Secretary-General further announced his intention to establish a three-man tribunal on war crimes to examine violations of human rights committed by all three sides in the Yugoslav conflict. A five-member Commission, previously established by the Security Council, is currently examining reports on human rights violations and grave breaches of the international human rights conventions. Mr. Boutros-Ghali said the work of the tribunal and the Commission would be coordinated.

Speaking about the situation in the Middle East and the recent deportation of Palestinians by the Israeli authorities, the Secretary-General told correspondents that his Special Envoy to the area, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs James Jonah, was currently holding talks with Israeli and Lebanese officials on the matter and would report to the Secretary-General shortly.

(more)

Earlier today, the Secretary-General met with Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) concerning the deportation of about 400 Palestinians from the Gaza Strip by Israel to southern Lebanon.

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Fatun Mohamed Hassan, the Permanent Representative of Somalia to the United Nations, in a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council, dated 24 December, said that she was was inclined to support the Secretary-General's position in requesting the Security Council that no new decisions on the situation in Somalia be taken until all the local factions are consulted on the subject.

In addition to ongoing consultations with all factions in Somalia, the collective view of these factions could be determined during the "informal meeting" scheduled for 4 January over which the Secretary-General was expected to preside, she states.

"I trust that the United States will consider the situation, as it always has, and will ensure that the United Nations will eventually take over responsibility from the Unified Military Command effectively to continue the inevitable peace-keeping operations in good time for all," also said Ms. Hassan.

The Somali representative urged all Member States to provide the resources that would bring about the humanitarian and security dimensions of the Somali crisis to an end and provide a cradle for reconciliation and stability in that country.

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In a first such incident in four weeks, an helicopter belonging to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was hit with small arms fire outside of Battambang province, in Cambodia, yesterday. No one was injured in the incident during which two bullets pierced the fuselage, according to UNTAC acting spokesman Eric Berman.

It was the twenty-third time that an UNTAC helicopter was hit in such a way.

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